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**Subject:** John Locke Foundation: It's a Slush Fund For The Cooper Administration, Folks. Details Here.

[John Locke Foundation: It's a Slush Fund For The Cooper Administration, Folks. Details Here.](#)

by Donna Martinez

January 29, 2018 at 5:52 am

It's a slush fund, folks. Carolina Journal reports here on a \$58 million fund outside of General Assembly authority that's part of the Cooper administration's deal to allow construction of Atlantic Coast Pipeline through eastern North Carolina. On Friday, as the story broke, Carolina Journal's reporting began:

The state Department of Environmental Quality issued a vital water permit Friday advancing the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project, but environmentalists immediately criticized Gov. Roy Cooper for signing off on the approval.

The 604-mile pipeline and compressor stations will carry natural gas from West Virginia to southeastern regions of Virginia and eight counties in North Carolina, ending just shy of the South Carolina border. The 401 water quality certification is required because the project has the potential to impact wetlands, buffers, or waterways.

“DEQ left no stone unturned in our exhaustive eight-month review of every aspect of the 401 application,” said DEQ Secretary Michael Regan.

And then this:

UPDATED, 2:35 p.m. The agreement between DEQ and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline operators includes a \$57.8 million payment by the companies to an “Escrow Account” chosen by the governor. The Memorandum of Understanding between the parties says the money will be used to mitigate environmental impacts of the pipeline; economic development projects in the affected counties; and renewable energy projects in the affected counties. This fund may operate outside normal legislative budgeting functions. Carolina Journal will continue updating the story as events warrant.

[Full details here.](#)